



Royston Arts Festival & Events

Premier Partner: Johnson Matthey

Annual Report 2020

ROYSTON ARTS FESTIVAL & EVENTS

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Management Committee 2020

Carl Filby, Chair and Websites Administrator

Chiara Mannalà, Community Liaison

Hannah Theobald, Vice-Chair

Andy Tunnicliffe, Secretary

Vacancies for the roles of Treasurer, Marketing, Volunteer Co-ordinator & Press.

Contact details

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Phone: Festival Helpline: 07907 880 355 (during September only)

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Web: www.createroyston.org & www.roystonmusicfest.uk

Facebook: /roystonartsfestival

Twitter: @royartsfest

Instagram: @creativeroyston

The 2020 arts festival has been unique and challenging as has the year itself for many people in the arts community and more generally. The Creative Royston Management Committee (CRMC) started the year in reasonable shape with six members but owing to work and domestic commitments we lost two members at a fairly early stage though not before we had decided that our festival theme would be 'A Question of Balance'. This was chosen partly as a play on the year 2020 and to highlight the importance of 'well-being' which can be achieved by correctly balancing the different priorities in our lives.

We delayed taking the decision to stage an online festival for as long as possible in the hope that we would be able to stage some live events but by June it had become clear that social distancing would still be a requirement come September. We had also lost a key component in the festival with the withdrawal of the 'Royston Fringe' which stages a number of entertainments, competitions and exhibitions based around the Methodist Church in Queens Road. A lot of their volunteers are senior citizens and understandably they felt that there was too much risk attached to 'live' events.

The first disappointing thing we had to do was to cancel 'The Return of Cookie MonStar' and inform 'Cookie' (Richard Rhodes) who was very understanding about it. We had booked the Picture Palace for this event and had hoped to double the full house attendance achieved at The Old Bull Inn for the 2019 festival. We had already decided that with such a small committee we would be unable to stage a Community Event in Priory Gardens on the final Saturday as in previous years so now it became a matter of what might be possible with an online festival.

Royston Arts Society (RAS) had faced a similar dilemma with their Members Exhibition which takes place each Spring and, as their website administrator, I suggested that we could hold an online exhibition instead. Whilst not exactly becoming a blueprint for an online arts festival the Members Exhibition did provide some valuable lessons, not least for the online RAS Autumn Exhibition which formed part of the arts festival.

Fortunately, some of the regular festival events, such as the RAS and Royston Photographic Society exhibitions, lent themselves quite readily to an online format and, by the time we had taken the decision to hold an online festival, many creative people and groups had embraced 'Zoom' and similar technologies that allow people to come together in a virtual manner. We were also fortunate that our Premier Partnership sponsor, Johnson Matthey, confirmed their regular funding of £5k for the festival and allowed us to spend or carry forward as much of that as we chose and we were very grateful to have that flexibility.

In 2019 we had a proper Opening Night for the first time in recent memory and as the concert by Alison Balsom and her Ensemble proved to be so enjoyable that we decided to repeat the experience as best we could. With the permission of Alison via her agents to use her online material, we located a 2016 Christmas

concert at the Meistersingerhalle, Nürnberg in Germany featuring Alison and an earlier incarnation of her Baroque Ensemble which played the concert at Ashwell in 2019.

The online festival allowed us to do something different with this year's MusicFest and spread the concerts out over both weekends and in-between instead of the usual Sunday afternoon sessions. This helped us to provide a reasonably substantial programme of events and exhibitions which allowed festival-goers to experience something different on each day of the festival. We also decided that it would be good to put a small amount of money back into the arts, via the performers, rather than simply curate a MusicFest comprising concerts already in the public domain on YouTube.

We were also able to stage an online version of our traditional Finale Concert thanks to Vice-Chair Hannah Theobald's organisational skills and contact list within the musical world. Hannah appeared in her professional capacity as Hannah Long along with friends who kindly donated their musical services free of charge, as did pianist Madalina Rusu and all the other performers. Amongst the highlights were contributions by Royston Town Band and bands and musicians from Royston's Twin towns of Großalmerode in Germany and Villanueva de la Cañada in Spain. Our Secretary, Andy Tunnicliffe, finished the concert with a rendering of the National Anthem on bass guitar.

The international flavour of the Finale Concert reflected the fact that an online festival is open to performers who would not normally be able to participate for geographic reasons and we found that was also true for some artists who would normally be beyond our budget. Kindly prompted by their agent, Adrian Mealing, well-known poets Roger McGough and Ian McMillan both contributed an original poem to the festival and Wendy Cope contributed readings of two of her existing poems.

We were also particularly grateful to Royston Museum which allowed us to air the first ever public screening of the film of Royston Tapestry, and to Meiru Ludlow who staged 3 different workshops on Facebook covering watercolour painting, Chinese cooking and the art of Ebru Marbling. CADS (Corvus Amateur Dramatic Society) also excelled with their evening of online entertainment in CADaret! and with their hosting of an online Q&A session by screenwriter Nick Warburton.

We had many other contributions from the community including a wide range of book reviews from individuals and Royston Library staff and are very grateful to all the contributors who are listed on the next page or elsewhere in this report. It wasn't the usual festival and we would have been very hard pressed to produce one given our small committee to whom I am very grateful for all their contributions and support.

For the second year running we have made this report available in electronic form as we continue to pursue environmentally-friendly policies and practices wherever possible. As you will see it also includes lots of links to allow you to experience many of the very enjoyable events of the 2020 festival at first-hand.

Carl Filby

Chairperson, January 2021

Creative Royston events could not happen without the hard work of our volunteers, this year the following people kindly gave their time to support the festival:

Stacey Leigh-Ross (Mixed-Media Artist), Emilie Lemons Golding (Graphic Artist for Battle of the Bands), Nicky Paton (designed the festival programme) & Cath Boughton (temporary editor for Social Media).

Andy Tunnicliffe took on the role of Secretary in 2019 and we would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his service as he steps down from the committee, and also Chiara Mannalà who felt that she had to resign from the committee as the Covid situation has meant she has had to return to Italy.

We are always keen to hear from people who would like to help out at events or who wish to join the management committee. If you're interested or would just like to know more, please email us on volunteers@creativeroyston.org.

Those who participated in the 2020 festival (virtually or otherwise) include Alison Balsom and her Baroque Ensemble; Linda Bance and WomenSing; Black Scarr; The Britton School of Performing Arts, Corvus Amateur Dramatic Society (CADS) and all their members backstage & front; Chris Fox; Lizzy Hardingham; Jeremy Harmer & The Ad Hoc Strings; Lloyd Crowley & Dan Thomas; Hannah Long, Jack Horrocks & Madalina Rusu; Kaszak & Afifi; Meiru Ludlow; Royston Arts Society; Royston Cave; Royston Folk Club; Royston & District Museum and Art Gallery; Royston Photographic Society; Royston Picture Palace; Royston Town Band; Royston Town Development Band; Royston Town Mayor Robert Inwood; the bands and musicians from Royston's Twin towns of Großalmerode in Germany and Villanueva de la Cañada in Spain; Schrödinger's Strings; Katie Spencer; Stage Right Dance School; Steve Winch and The Inception; Tin Giants; Andy Tunnicliffe, and Nick Warburton.

Businesses, local authorities, charities and other organisations which contributed financially or in-kind in 2020 include: Brian Leslie Racher Trust; Johnson Matthey plc; The Listing; Royston Library; Royston Rotary Club, and Royston Town Council.

Thank you also to everyone who contributed to our publicity efforts by putting up posters in their windows, helping distribute flyers and sharing posts etc. on social media.

Creative Royston committed early on to the concept of Herts Year of Culture 2020 and in the absence of any other funding set up a budget of £200 within its own funds to cover publicity and marketing costs for the Royston group promoting HYOC2020.

Some of this was spent on flyers, posters and a banner for a 'Celebration Day' set up for Saturday March 28th in Royston Market which unfortunately had to be cancelled owing to the Covid crisis as were many other planned events as the crisis developed. Fortunately, we were able to use the banner as part of the publicity for the 'online' Royston Arts Festival in September.

Creative Writing Competition

Thanks to continuing support from The Rotary Club of Royston we were once again able to run a creative writing competition which was open to all ages. We were looking for inspiring original writing within 4 age groups with a limit of 500 words and with our theme 'A Question of Balance' at its core. We also scrapped the distinction between fiction and non-fiction.



The poster for the Creative Writing Competition 2020 features a yellow background. At the top left, it says 'Creative Royston Royston Arts Festival'. The main title is 'Creative Writing Competition 2020'. Below this, it reads 'Capture the Royston Arts Festival theme 'A Question of Balance' in 500 words.' A central graphic is a circular yin-yang symbol with a green leaf on the left and a blue water drop on the right. Below the graphic, it asks 'Fact or fiction? How do you keep your life in balance?'. A green box states 'Deadline for entry: Sunday 16th August'. Text below explains that a panel of experienced writers will select a winner in each of four age groups: 5-9, 10-13, 14-17, and 18+. It also mentions that book vouchers to the value of £50 will be awarded to the winners. The Rotary Club of Royston logo is shown, along with the Johnson Matthey Premier Partner logo. At the bottom, it says 'Full details, competition rules and entry forms available from www.creativeroyston.org'.

We were very grateful for the assistance of our expert judges - children's author Catherine Rosevear and journalists Angus Batey and David Blundell, the latter being also a Rotarian.

Unfortunately, the number of entries in the Under-18 categories were again disappointing and only one prize of £50 of book vouchers was awarded to Tom Walsh, Age 9, for his story 'Finn the Flamingo'.

The winner in the Over-18 category was Natasha Hill for her story 'Walking on a Tightrope' and her prize was also £50 worth of book vouchers.

The joint runners-up in this category who received £25 worth of book vouchers were Amanda Gibson for 'The Circling Vulture' and Phil Oddy for 'Buzz'.

Thank you to the Rotary Club of Royston for sponsoring the prizes in this competition and you can read the winning stories by clicking on the links

below.

[The Tightrope](#)

[Buzz](#)

[The Circling Vulture](#)

[Finn The Flamingo](#)

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Cover Art Competition

We were indebted to local artist Stacey Leigh-Ross (ByLeigh) who was kind enough once again to run the cover art competition despite the increased difficulties of working in the middle of a pandemic.

This year we had to ask for digital images of original artwork from the children entering and were pleased to receive around 50 entries. Stacey chose images from 20 items and used them in a mixed media collage to form the imagery for the festival. We did not produce a festival programme this year owing to the effect on publication deadlines caused by a large number of entries being finalised at a much later date than usual. Instead, we published a provisional festival programme in the September edition of The Listing and proprietor, Cath Boughton, kindly allowed Stacey's artwork to appear on the front cover.

We also decided that this year, as we were unable to display the original artwork in public at the Royston Arts Society Autumn Exhibition, we would not auction the work but instead present it to Royston Museum when a suitable opportunity could be found to do so. That way it was hoped it would serve as a reminder of what had been achieved by the Royston community in this Covid-affected year.

Below you can see the artist's map created by Stacey showing where she got her inspiration from and which elements of the children's artwork went into the final composition.



Royston Arts Festival 2020

Programme

Events	Description & links (where still available) in Green
Friday 18 th – 7.00pm	Opening Night Festival Launch – click HERE .
Friday 18 th – 7.30pm	Opening Night Concert – Alison Balsom & The Balsom Ensemble. click HERE .
Saturday 19 th – Midday	Cover Artwork Competition – unveiling of artwork map showing which children’s art went into ByLeigh’s original artwork. See all the artwork HERE .
Saturday 19 th – 2.00pm	Ebru Marbling Art workshop by Meiru Ludlow – link to video on Facebook page
Saturday 19 th – 2.30pm	Lloyd Crowley & Dan Thomas in a lockdown concert.
Saturday 19 th – 7.30pm	CADaret! An evening of poems, songs, monologues & readings performed by members of CADS (Corvus Amateur Dramatic Society) Click HERE to view.
Sunday 20 th – 2.00pm	Watercolour Painting workshop by Meiru Ludlow – link to her Facebook page
Sunday 20 th – 8.00pm	Royston MusicFest presents – Jeremy Harmer & The Ad Hoc Strings in Concert
Monday 21 st – 8.00pm	Royston MusicFest presents – Kaszak & Afifi supporting Tin Giants in Concert
Tuesday 22 nd – 5.00pm	‘Sing if you want to’ – an online singing session for would-be singers from Linda Bance via Zoom link.
Wed 23 rd – 7.30pm	Screenwriter Nick Warburton (Eastenders, Holby City) in online talk and Q&A hosted by CADS. Email cadsecretary@gmail.com for Zoom link and details.
Wed 23 rd – 8.00pm	Royston MusicFest presents – Katie Spencer and Lizzy Hardingham in Concert.
Friday 25 th – 8.00pm	Royston MusicFest presents – Chris Fox supporting Steve Winch & The Inception in Concert.
Sat 26 th 3.00-3.45pm & 4.00-5.00pm	Fun ‘Cats’ Dance workshops hosted by Lynsey Britton, Principal of The Britton School of Performing Arts for 7-10 year-olds & 11 plus.
Sat 26 th – 5.00pm	Royston Town Band live performance via Facebook .
Sat 26 th – 7.30pm	Royston Picture Palace live screening of Max Richter’s Sleep (PG) . CANCELLED but click HERE for other film details & tickets this weekend.
Sat 26 th – 8.00pm	Royston MusicFest presents – Black Scarr supporting Schrödinger’s Strings in Concert.
Sunday 27 th – 2.00pm	Chinese Cooking workshop by Meiru Ludlow – link to her Facebook page
Sunday 27 th – 7.30pm	Finale Concert featuring Soprano Hannah Long & Friends; pianist Madalina Rusu; The Britton School of Performing Arts; Bands from Royston’s German & Spanish Twin Towns, & Royston Town Band. Download programme HERE . Click HERE to view.

Exhibitions /competitions/ephemera - Description & links (where still available) in Green	
<u>Royston Arts Society Autumn Exhibition</u>	View and purchase paintings from local and professional artists at the largest, most diverse art exhibition in Royston's creative calendar.
<u>Royston Photographic Society Exhibition</u>	Take a guided tour through a thought-provoking virtual exhibition from escapist travel locations to colourful landscapes to clever photographic effects.
<u>Royston Tapestry</u>	Watch a 5-minute film showing the entire 24 metres of the Royston Tapestry online for the first time ever and then read more about the 30-year project.
<u>Royston Museum</u>	The Museum has put together an online exhibition of works by Eve, a talented young local artist, studying at Bassingbourn Village College.
<u>Royston Picture Palace</u>	As well as the live screening on the 26th which unfortunately had to be cancelled the Picture Palace also offered a film that festival goers could stream online and curated some films to watch and discuss as part of the festival.
<u>Cover Artwork Competition</u>	View all the entries to become part of ByLeigh's original artwork and then view the map showing which did on Saturday 19th (see Events above)
<u>Book reviews</u>	Royston Library staff and some well-known Royston residents reviewed around 30 books which have some significance for them or they have just enjoyed reading.
<u>Poetry - Poets in their own words</u>	Poets Roger McGough and Ian McMillan have each written a poem for the festival. Listen to and read their poems and explore poetry in a bit more depth by clicking the link to the left.
Two short films of the <u>2013</u> & <u>2016</u> Royston Arts Festival.	Involved in the arts in Royston and feeling nostalgic? Spot yourself or your children in these strolls down memory lane. Click the years to the left to watch the films.
<u>Royston Cave Tour</u>	Royston Cave provided free visits to festival-goers via their newly available 3D virtual tour of this mysterious and historic Royston landmark.
<u>Stage Right Dance School</u>	A delightful and sometimes spectacular selection of performances over the years, approximately 24 minutes in length from Stage Right.
<u>Baroque Music</u>	If you enjoyed the concert by Alison Balsom and her Ensemble, she talks here about the Baroque Trumpet and other musicians talk about their Baroque instruments.

**5,408 VIEWINGS OF
ARTS FESTIVAL EVENTS**



Jeremy Harmer & The Ad Hoc Strings
© J. Harmer / S. Bingham



Roger McGough © Nick Wright Photography.

**30+ BOOK REVIEWS
26 POETRY READINGS
(including 2 specially
written for the festival)**

**281 VIEWINGS OF CADARET!
AN EVENING OF POEMS,
SONGS, MONOLOGUES &
READINGS**



Kathy Young & Louise Atkins
© Corvus Amateur Dramatic Society

Royston Arts Festival 2020 Attendance Figures

For the online festival we used a range of websites to host events and the statistics reflect the information collected about attendances via the number of visitors and viewings recorded. Separately, in the 'Marketing' section below we show the statistics relating to our use of Social Media.

The overall number of 'views' of the festival events between the opening night on Friday 18th September and the Finale Concert night on Sunday 27th September was 5,418, which is almost exactly equivalent to the overall number of 'visits' to the 2019 festival which we estimated at 5,400. It is important to note that we always estimate the number of 'visits' to a festival rather than the number of 'visitors' as an individual visitor may attend more than one event.

One advantage of an online festival over an actual one is that many of the events can be left in place for people to enjoy after the official end date and in the fortnight following the official festival period a further 1,120 views were recorded about three quarters of which were related to Royston Arts Society Autumn Exhibition which continued until the end of November.

Of all the **Creative Royston** events the **Finale Concert** was the most successful with 394 views on YouTube. We were unable to monitor the number of viewings of the **Alison Balsom** opening night concert as this was not located on either the Creative Royston or Royston MusicFest YouTube Channels which were both used to host festival material.

Royston MusicFest normally attracts in the region of 1400 visits each year but the website clocked up only 409 views during the festival. That may reflect the fact that whilst people are happy to listen to free live music as part of an afternoon at a pub or club, unless they are a particular fan of a band or musician, there are a lot of counter attractions online.

The **Book Reviews** were the source of much interest and attracted 313 views during the festival period, whilst the **Creative Writing Competition** also attracted 92 views, somewhat higher than expected. The **Cover Art Competition** attracted 56 views compared to only 47 views of the **Poetry** page and, disappointingly, only a handful of viewers carried on to view the actual readings on YouTube despite the high profile of the contributing poets. This and other viewing figures may be explained by the observation that people are more interested in events with a local interest.

The 1-minute film of the 2016 festival fared well with 139 views. By contrast the 3-minute film made for the 2013 festival only attracted 15 views. Does that say something about the attention span of the average viewer or does it simply mean that there is less interest in an older festival?

Of the contributions from other groups and societies the **Royston Arts Society Autumn Exhibition** fared best with 1,012 views during the festival period and they had many further viewings in the subsequent fortnight after the festival as mentioned above, all of which compares well with the 800 visits (approximately) that they would normally attract to their Autumn Exhibition.

Royston Photographic Society (RPS) staged their Annual Photographic Exhibition via an external website which opened in tandem with and as part of Royston Arts Festival. They attracted 370 views in total which was not far short of the 450 visits to their exhibition in 2019.

Corvus Amateur Dramatic Society (CADS) staged **CADaret!** an evening of poems, songs, monologues & readings performed by members of CADS) which attracted 281 viewings.

Other contributions which did well included the **Stage Right Dance School** video with 184 views and the film of **Royston Tapestry** with 114 views.

We were unable to record the viewing figures for **Royston Picture Palace** which hosted some films on their website during the festival period, and also for **Royston Cave** which provided free online access to their stunning 3D virtual tour.

Not everything worked either! We didn't get any entries for a proposed 'Battle of the Bands' owing probably to the Covid situation which must have made it impossible to rehearse or make the video which was required for entry. Also, there was hardly any interest in an Arts Quiz, possibly because everyone was all quizzed out by September.

Unfortunately, **Royston Fringe** were unable to take part in the festival this year and we missed their substantial contribution which is based around the Methodist Church in Queen's Road. Most of their volunteers are in the most vulnerable Covid categories and understandably they had to pull out of the festival at an early stage.

Feedback

We did not ask for feedback for the 2020 online festival as we have done for all previous festivals in recent years as most of the information we normally collect about events was not relevant this year and we could not have compared like with like or drawn any worthwhile conclusions. However, we did receive informal feedback from a number of sources a selection of which are reproduced below.

“A great concert in difficult circumstances. What a wealth of talent Royston has, well done everyone. Especially nice to see contributions from our twin towns.” Roger Simons

“Yes - so much talent and what a great concert - Royston (and others in the online community) are very lucky to have people willing to put in the effort with this and other Arts Festival contributions to Hertfordshire's Year of Culture.” John Lee

“We are blessed with an abundance of talent in our town. Thank you and well done to everyone participating in, working hard for and helping out behind the scenes during the 2020 online Royston Arts Festival - it's been hugely entertaining. See you in 2021.” Emma Daintrey

“Wonderful uplifting concert Jeremy. Thank you.” Mark Andrews

“Beautiful!!” An Croenen

“The Royston Arts Festival has always been a great celebration of talent, bringing people together in our community. This year the need for that tradition has been greater than ever. Achieving so much online in 2020 - across a wide range of art forms and for all ages - is down to the hard work and creativity of a core of dedicated Creative Royston volunteers. They've put Royston on the cultural map, not just in the East of England but, potentially, across the world.” Chris Lee, Royston Choral Society and Folk Club fan.

“We have received a lot of very favourable comments from artists (both members and non-members) and the general public. Overall, we think these online exhibitions were a big success. As far as we know, RAS was the only local art society that attempted any online art exhibitions this year.” – Richard Clayton, Chair of Royston Arts Society in his report to the AGM, January 2021.

Marketing and Promotion

Unfortunately, we did not have anyone to focus solely on the marketing role in 2020 and the task fell largely to the Chair, who by his own admission is far removed from being an expert at social media. However, all the committee pulled together with the distribution of banners, posters and flyers and chipped in wherever possible.

Leaving aside the website which we use to provide information in a more general sense, our marketing effort comprised four main areas of activity: the programme; banners, posters and flyers; press and social media; and communication with schools.

The Programme:

As in previous years, the Festival programme was distributed by The Listing to its full distribution list of 16,500 homes in Royston and 31 surrounding villages in South Cambridgeshire and North Hertfordshire. However, for the online festival, it became impossible to produce a separate programme owing to the general uncertainty over Covid with a lot of people making an effort to contribute something quite late on, effectively well past what would have been our normal copy deadline in August. Instead, we advertised a broad programme in the centre pages of the September edition of The Listing magazine, covering almost all the events and exhibitions etc... but of necessity leaving many details to be published on our main website as part of the full final programme. By doing so we achieved the same circulation whilst at the same time as reducing our carbon footprint and reducing our costs. We also believe that the impact of the programme was at least equivalent to normal, probably better, thanks to The Listing putting the Cover Art Competition artwork on the front cover.

Banners, posters and flyers:

Vinyl banners were displayed at Tesco roundabout, Folknoll roundabout on Old North Road, Royston Train Station, The Jolly Postie and Royston Town Hall. Posters were put up at and programme flyers distributed from Royston Library and several other places in the town centre and also at Tesco, though the major distribution at Royston Kite Festival in August was lost as that event was cancelled. Thank you to all those concerned who kindly helped us to publicise the festival in this way.

Press and Social Media:

The Listing magazine, as always, was very helpful in providing regular articles and updates on our activities during the year and particularly in the build-up to the festival. By comparison, the Royston Crow coverage of the festival was very poor and very little appeared in that newspaper in the way of advance publicity despite at least two articles with accompanying photographs sent in advance. The Crow now seem often to publicise events outside Royston at the expense of local events with more immediate appeal to residents of Royston.

Annual Report 2020

Despite the lack of a dedicated marketing person social media continued to play an important role in our marketing activity. The Festival's social media presence was significantly boosted by a number of local accounts and we'd like to thank everyone who helped to raise awareness by posting, liking and sharing.

We published a total of 24 Facebook posts during September which reached 6,234 people. By far the most successful of these was the one for Royston MusicFest with 2,000 people reached but if that is removed from the equation, we averaged a 'reach' of 184 people with each post.

The total number of people liking the Creative Royston Facebook page is 545 compared to 495 last year, an increase of 10%.

By contrast we under used Twitter to the extent that we sent only 7 Tweets in 2020 compared to 16 Tweets in September 2019 during the run-up to the festival with 2,255 compared to 12,770 impressions last year. Although we now have 1,102 followers that is only 8 up on 2019 and illustrates quite clearly that we need to make much more use of Twitter than we managed in admittedly exceptional circumstances.

We also failed to make use of newsletters in 2020, though, to be fair, there was not a lot of news about!

Schools:

We continue to work with schools in Royston and the surrounding villages most obviously through our Cover Art and Creative Writing competitions and thank those schools that helped us to publicise those competitions.

We appreciate that it has been a particularly difficult year for schools and we hope that we can resume and consolidate our previously strong relationship when circumstances allow.

Creative Royston Draft Financial Statements For the year ending 31 December 2020

For approval by the Annual General Meeting on 12th January 2021

Supporting Statement

Once again, we are grateful for the generous local support and sponsorship from our Premier Partner Johnson Matthey which not only continued their support for our online festival but also very kindly allowed us to carry over any sponsorship money that we didn't spend this year to spend in 2021.

We are also very grateful to the Brian Lesley Racher Trust which has given us great assistance over the last few years supporting MusicFest in its entirety and also making a substantial contribution to the production or distribution of our festival programme.

Thanks also go to Royston Rotary Club for again providing the prizes for our Creative Writing Competition.

It is the policy of the organisation to hold a reserve fund approximately equal to one year's festival cost (approximately £15k). In 2019 our events were well supported and we ended up substantially in credit on the year. In 2020, with a much lower income we have again been well in credit though this time largely due to our inability to spend money on live events. In 2021 we will aim to spend more on events and reduce our reserve fund to align with our policy, providing the Covid situation allows us to do sensibly.

In the absence of a Treasurer, I have again put together an Income & Expenditure Account covering the 2020 festival alone. It shows that Creative Royston remains in a healthy financial position and the organisation closed the year with a general reserve fund of £25,958.36 which is comprised of an opening balance of £21,781.63, plus the £4,176.73 net income figure for 2020. To the best of my knowledge all outstanding debts from 2020 have been paid as have those of 2019 except for the hire charge for King James Academy Hall. Despite several reminders no invoice nor instructions for payment have ever been received.

In mid-2019 we closed our current bank account with NatWest, which no longer had a branch in Royston, and opened one with Lloyds Bank which does. We also acquired a Debit Card with the new account which has been used extensively and almost eliminated the use of cheques keeping postage costs to a minimum.

Carl Filby
Chairperson
10 January 2020

Income & Expenditure Account - Draft For the year ending 31 December 2020

	2020	2019
INCOME	£	£
Sponsorship	5,150.00	7,150.00
Grants	2,700.00	4,700.00
Ticket Sales & Other Earned Income	26.97	8,750.87
TOTAL INCOME	7,876.97	20,600.87
EXPENDITURE		
Artist fees & associated expenses	975.00	6,071.29
Advertising & Marketing	00.00	129.20
Volunteer Costs	80.00	72.80
Equipment & materials Costs	373.10	1,396.67
Seed-Funding & prizes	156.75	1,154.84
Venue Costs	00.00	227.00
Insurance, First Aid and Licences	268.40	260.40
Stocks for Refreshments	00.00	210.61
Miscellaneous	77.58	52.64
Printing Costs (non-programme)	99.00	145.50
Programme Costs	1,359.00	3,558.73
Donation to Royston Parish Church	00.00	2,396.16
Repayment of Unused Grant (to BLRT)	256.00	
Governance Costs		
Subscriptions	00.00	00.00
Website & IT costs	50.85	94.82
AGM	included in Miscellaneous	
Stationery & Postage	04.56	00.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	3,700.24	15,770.66
PLUS LATE INVOICES *	00.00	494.01
NET INCOME FOR THE YEAR	4,176.73	4,336.20
* Hire charge for King James Academy Hall		224.40
* Waste management charge from NHDC		219.61
* First Aid from Hearts for Herts Ltd		50.00

Looking Ahead

We could all have done with a Crystal Ball at the start of 2020 though we probably would not have enjoyed the sight of what was to come and as I write this there are still many uncertainties about the Covid situation.

If the government's vaccination programme goes to plan and all their calculations are correct then we may be starting to emerge from the crisis around April but there are an awful lot of 'ifs and buts'. That timetable could easily slip by a matter of months and it is really too early to speculate what sort of festival we might have in 2021 at this point in time.

Although we have lost the services of Chiara Mannalà and Andy Tunnicliffe, Hannah Theobald has kindly said that she will continue as Vice-Chair and to organise the Finale Concert, if it takes place, despite a new addition to her family expected in January 2021. We wish her all the very best and hope everything goes smoothly.

We have also acquired a number of new members to the CRMC – Erin Bond who is standing for the post of Treasurer; Meiru Ludlow who will take on Marketing, and Christin Bauer who will take on the post of Volunteer Co-ordinator. Marguerite Phillips has been elected as the Town Council Representative on the committee and Ruth Brown has also volunteered to add her NHDC and Town Council experience.

We have chosen the theme of 'Renewal' for 2021 and in line with the word's meaning we hope that we will be 'starting again' where necessary, 'continuing' where we left off, or better still 'improving' our lives from lessons learned during the Covid pandemic.

It seems sensible to be cautious about what we can achieve in 2021, as so much is unpredictable and out of our hands, and as a consequence we have decided that we will focus on one main festival weekend rather than two. That doesn't mean that we will necessarily be cutting back on events and we will remain flexible and open to extending the festival if circumstances allow. In fact, we have already lined up our first event for 2021 in the form of a Creative Royston Window Walk for the February half-term based on the idea behind the Pumpkin Parade.

Let's just hope that 2021 will be a better year all round!
